peror down, exhorted those subject to them to observe the moral principles of the sages. Much of this, to be sure, was a platitudinous hypocrisy which deceived no one except the very simple. However, the sincerity which Confucius stressed was by no means entirely lacking. Even though a minority, there were untold numbers, some of them among the educated and powerful and some of them in the humble walks of life, who embodied to a remarkable extent the virtues which the sages had stressed.

Throughout the land the Confucian virtues were lauded and set a standard of conduct which exercised a profound influence.

As we have seen, the state had a system of religious and moral education which reached the great bulk of the Chinese. Of this the frequent and regularly performed ceremonies constituted an important part. The preparation for the civil service examinations, based as it was upon the Confucian Classics, directly reached hundreds of thousands in each generation and, by the prestige accorded the holders of literary degrees, invested the Confucian precepts with a halo of sanctity. Official proclamations and, under the later Ch'ing Emperors, the public reading of the Sacred Edict afforded additional channels of familiarizing the populace with orthodox moral standards. Among the duties stressed by the Sacred Edict were care for one's parents, harmony and forbearance in the family and clan, reciprocal helpfulness in the community, the assistance of neighbors in a calamity, courtesy, thrift, foresight, the attempt to reconcile disputants and so to allay litigation, the avoidance of talebearing and of pride, assistance to schools, the eschewal of gambling and thieving, and reverence toward Heaven. The motives appealed

to, it may be noted, were largely prudential—the present welfare of oneself and that of society and affection to one's parents. There was no threat of punishment or promise of reward in a future life and no especial appeal to the will of Heaven.

### HONORS TO ANCESTORS

It is by no means clear whether what is usually known as the worship of ancestors should be classified under Confucianism,
As we have seen, temples to and ceremonies in honor of ancestors long antedated Confucius. Many ideas and practices by no means Confucian in their origin came to be grouped around